SERMON

Preached before the

King & Queen

AT

WHITEHALL.

June the 1*ſt*. 1690.

By *Robert Grove*, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to their MAJESTIES.

Publiſhed by their Majeſties ſpecial Command.

LONDON,

Printed for *W. Kettilby*, at the *Biſhops Head* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard. 1690.

158 x 146
(1) 27 f.

1 John II. 15.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

LOVE is the moſt powerful of all the Paſſions of the Soul; and that which does moſt effectually byaſs and incline the Mind unto any Object it happens to be placed upon. And there are two things in the general that do moſt earneſtly court us, and one of them is always ſure to win our Affections. God himſelf, out of his Infinite tenderneſs to the Sons of Men, is pleas'd ſo far to condeſcend,

7a.

as to woo and beſeech us to be reconciled unto him: And he enforces his ſuit by the real propoſal of Peace and Honour, Glory and Immortality, and Everlaſting Joys. And on the other ſide, the world too; that ſtrives to gain the greateſt intereſt in our Hearts, and endeavours to work upon us by the vain promiſes of ſome tranſitory Pleaſures; a little Wealth, and a certain kind of Happineſs, which it pretends it can beſtow upon us out of hand: And if we harken to the one of theſe, we ſhall become Sober, Good, and Holy Men, and ſhall be ſure at the laſt not to loſe our Reward: But if we give ear to the other, we ſhall grow vain and wicked in our imaginations, eager and reſtleſs in the purſuit of ſhadows and trifles, and in the end we ſhall be moſt certainly defeated of all our fooliſh hopes; ſo that our love, according as it is diverſly plac'd, becomes the Original of all the Good and Evil in the world, and of that Happineſs or Miſery that is conſequent upon

on them; and the whole of Moral Divinity does in ſome ſort depend upon the due management and regulation of this one Paſſion. And becauſe the Vanities of this preſent world are very apt to inſinuate themſelves into our Affections, and get too great an intereſt in them, we may eaſily underſtand what Reaſon we have to be always mindful of the ſerious Caution and Exhortation of the holy Apoſtle, which I have read unto you; *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* For the better Explication and Improvement of which words, I ſhall diſcourſe ſomething briefly upon theſe five general Heads: And ſhew,

1. *Firſt*, What is here meant by the *world, and the things that are in it.*
2. *Secondly*, How far it may be lawful for us to love them.
3. *Thirdly*, What kind of love of them it is which is here forbidden.

4. *Fourthly*, That ſuch a love of them is inconſiſtent with the love of God.
5. *Fifthly*, and laſtly, I ſhall lay down ſome Directions how to avoid this irregular and inordinate love of the world.

I. *Firſt*, What is here meant by the *World*, *and the things that are in the World.* And there can be no doubt, but that according to the uſual phraſe of the holy Scriptures, we are to underſtand this inferiour and ſublunary world; the Earth which we do for the preſent inhabit; this place, where Labours and Sorrows have taken up their abode, ever ſince the fall of Man. And the things of the world are the various Objects of our Senſes; the ſeveral Toys and Vanities that are wont to charm our deluded Fancies and Appetites. They are very commonly, and well enough divided into Pleaſures, Profits, and Honours; for this is the ſum total of all earthly Enjoyments; this is the utmoſt that

that the Carnal Man deſires, and this is all that the world is able to give. St. *John*, in the words that immediately follow my Text, deſcribes theſe things by the effects which they too often have upon us, when he calls them *the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*; and tells us that this is *all that is in the world*; that is, There is nothing elſe there, but what may occaſionally excite and foment ſuch inclinations as theſe: Nothing but what may either prompt us to Senſuallty and Intemperance; or make us guilty of Covetouſneſs and Injuſtice; or ſwell us up with ambitious and aſpiring thoughts. Such is the world, and ſuch are all the things that are in it.

II. Let us in the ſecond place conſider, how far it may be lawful for us to love theſe things: For they are not abſolutely Evil in themſelves, but may ſometimes be made ſo unto us, by our abuſe of them; but God created them all for good purpoſes; and therefore we may love them in ſome

ſome meaſure without offence, if we be but careful to obſerve theſe and the like Cautions:

1. Firſt, we muſt love them but according to the nature and uſefulneſs of them. Every Creature of God is good; and every degree of goodneſs does naturally require a ſutable degree of love; and our love is then reaſonable, and ſuch as becomes wiſe and ſober men, when we do, as much as may be, proportion our affections to the worth and dignity of the Object. God therefore being infinitely good, our love to him, as far as is poſſible, ought likewiſe to be boundleſs and immenſe, ſtretched out, and extended to the very utmoſt capacities of our Souls. And for other things, it is lawful for us to love them too, ſo far as they do participate of that Supreme and Soveraign Goodneſs. The real Perfection of the Object ought to be the ſtanding Meaſure whereby we ſhould always limit and regulate our love. And if we do but carefully obſerve this Rule, there is nothing that God

God has made which may not afford us ſome innocent delight or advantage. The very Pleaſures of Senſe, wherein men are generally the moſt apt to offend, and run into exceſs, yet theſe, if they be duly circumſcribed, and kept within the bounds which the Laws of God and Nature have ſet them, may be harmleſs, and allowable. Riches may be lawfully deſired by us, as they ſerve the neceſſities and conveniencies of this mortal life; as they may make our Charity more uſeful and beneficial unto others; and as they maintain that difference of Degrees and Quality amongſt men, which is abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of good Order and Government in the world. Honour is not wholly to be deſpiſed, as it is a Tribute which ought to be paid to great and virtuous Actions; as it confirms the teſtimonies of our own Conſciences; and as it gives us many opportunities of doing good, which we could not have without the aſſiſtance of a clear and ſpotleſs Reputation. And in ſuch a manner as this we are not

forbidden

forbidden to love the things of the world: and if any man will make it his choice, to rid his Soul wholly of all earthly concerns, to make the more room for the love of God, and the continual exercise of devotion; this indeed may be an act of heroical piety in him; but yet those that love these things, with that limitation which I have now laid down, are not therefore to be condemned.

2. Secondly, in our love to the world, and the things of it, we must have a regard to the duration and continuance of them. If they were of infinitely greater value than they are, yet we know that it is but a very little while that we can enjoy them. All things here below are perpetually in motion, they are tossed to and fro like the waves of the Sea: They are exposed to ten thousand casualties and disasters, that are ready every moment to snatch them out of our hands. Or if possibly we should be so fortunate as to escape all these, yet we are sure that we our selves are hasting continually towards the Grave, and that it cannot be long

long before we muſt go away hence, and be ſeen no more. There is nothing here to be depended upon. However proſperous our condition may be for the preſent, the whole ſcene of Affairs may be ſuddenly changed. The cleareſt day may be preſently overcaſt, and the brighteſt Sun may ſet in a Cloud. Our Eſtates may be loſt, our Friends may forſake us, our Children may dye, our Pleaſures will decay, our Credit and Eſteem amongſt men may be quickly blaſted by a ſlanderous tongue, and end in ignominy and diſgrace: However, it cannot be avoided but that our Pomp and our Honour, and all that we have, muſt at laſt be laid down, and covered in the duſt. And ſince then that the good things of this world are known to be ſo very tranſient and uncertain in their own nature, we may love them, provided our love be ſuited to the condition of the things themſelves; it muſt not be a ſettled, fixed, and unmoveable love. We muſt conſider that they are rather lent, than given us; and we ſhould be as ready to reſtore,

as we were to receive them. We must chearfully deliver up all our earthly Concerns to the wise and gracious disposal of Almighty God. A Stoical Apathy is more indeed than is required of us. The true Christian may be something delighted with temporal Blessings, and not altogether insensible of worldly misfortunes; but then the pleasure he takes in the enjoyment of them is sober and temperate, and the grief he conceives at the parting with them is not excessive: He is a little delighted with the Gourd while it flourishes, but he does not fret and grow angry when it withers away. He enjoys the world with moderation, and lets it go without any anxious and desponding thoughts.

3. Thirdly, We must be careful that the love of any thing in the world be never more prevalent with us than the love of God. The most incomprehensible Excellencies of his Divine Nature do command us to reverence and admire him; and the unspeakable Benefits he has already bestowed, and the many

many Bleſſings which he is continually heaping up on us, and the glorious Promiſes which he has made us of Life and Salvation, are the ſtrongeſt obligations imaginable for us to return unto him the greateſt vigour and intenſeneſs of our Affections. And when ſuch a love of our Maker has gotten the ſupreme power and ſoveraignty in our Hearts, ſo that our minds are effectually ſwayed and inclined as they are directed by that, then ſome lower degree of complacency may be allow'd to theſe inferiour things without offence. Our love of the world is not ſinful when it is kept within the juſt boundaries that I have now preſcribed; when we love it but according to the nature and duration of it, and always with ſubmiſſion to the love of God.

III. And from theſe things which I have now briefly diſcours'd, it may plainly appear, What kind of love of the world it is which is here forbidden, which was the third general thing that I laid down.

1. And, *Firſt*, Therefore our love of the

world is unlawful, when we love it beyond the natural worth and value of it. And this does manifeſtly diſcover it ſelf, when our deſires after it are violent and impetuous; when we are impatient in the purſuit, and intemperate in the enjoyment; when we are ſo paſſionately bent upon our pleaſures, as if theſe ſordid and muddy delights were the only or the chiefeſt happineſs we did expect; when we are ſo extremely fond of being rich and great, that we are reſtleſs and uneaſie with a competent Eſtate, and a moderate Fortune ſeems a burden unto us; when we are ſo tranſported with any degree of Honour and Eminency we may chance to attain, that we are preſently fill'd with lofty and fooliſh imaginations; when we envy our Superiors, deſpiſe our Equals, and look down with ſcorn and diſdain upon our Inferiors. When we find our ſelves to be thus diſpoſed in any of theſe or the like inſtances, it is a ſign that our Affections for the world are irregular and extravagant, a great deal bigger than the things deſerve.

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And when they are ſo, they become the immediate and neceſſary cauſes of all the miſeries and miſchiefs that ever do or can befal us. They are theſe that puſh Men forward to all the acts of wickedneſs and folly, and hurry them on to their own deſtruction. They are theſe that tempt the licentious Epicure to all his Debaucheries; that make him run with greedineſs into all manner of exceſs; that provoke him to break down the incloſures that God has made, and lye in wait to defile his Neighbour's Bed. They are theſe that beſot the Covetous Wretch with a different ſort of ſenſuality, and make him drunk with the tears of Widows and Orphans; that turn him into a kind of moral *Cannibal*, that even tears and devours the fleſh of the Poor. They are theſe that are the real occaſions of all the Murder, and Rapine, and Deſolation that we daily ſee or hear of in the world; the moſt furious and bloody Wars and military executions, in which ſo many innocent Mens lives are thrown away, and ſo many

many thouſand Families moſt miſerably ruined, are frequently nothing elſe but the tragical effects of a mind ſwollen and diſtemper'd with Cruelty and Ambition. Such are the lamentable conſequences that do naturally follow the immoderate love of any worldly thing. For our earthly Paſſions are like a River; while they keep themſelves within their proper Channel, they ſlide along gently, and obſerve a regular courſe, and may make our lives both pleaſant and fruitful; but when they begin to ſwell and grow turbulent, and overflow their Banks, there is nothing then to be expected but a flood and inundation of all manner of ſin.

2. *Secondly*, Our love of the world is faulty again, when we do not conſider the ſhort continuance of it, and how little a while it is that we can poſſibly enjoy it. And in this the ſtrange inadvertency of the generality of Men is much to be admired. In their proſperity they are apt to think that they ſhall never be moved; and live as if they were not Strangers and Pilgrims, but that

that they had a ſure and ſettled dwelling here upon Earth. The experience of every day is enough to convince them how ridiculouſly they are miſtaken: they ſhould therefore reſtrain their love to theſe fading Vanities, and make it as temporary as the Objects of it are; for it is abſurd and unreaſonable to have permanent and immortal affections for tranſient and periſhable things. The Branches ſhould wither and die when the Root is decayed from whence they did ſpring. It lays a certain foundation for perpetual diſquietude and anguiſh of mind, to have vigorous deſires remaining in us, when every thing that ſhould give them any ſatisfaction is irreparably loſt. St. *John* tells us, *v.* 17. that *the world paſſeth away*: and therefore our love for it ſhould *paſs away* with it; or elſe in ſtead of giving us any contentment and delight, as we might vainly hope, it will ſerve for nothing but to gall and torment us.

3. *Thirdly*, The love of the world is forbidden when it has a greater power upon us than

than the love of our Maker has. And we may certainly judge that the caſe is thus, when ever we are tempted and prevailed upon to ſin againſt God, by the propoſal of any preſent Pleaſure or Advantage. As when we ſhall dare to be guilty of Injuſtice or Oppreſſion, to encreaſe our Fortunes, and advance our ſelves to ſome farther degree of Wealth or Honour; when we will venture to run into exceſs of Wine, to gratifie a brutiſh appetite, or pleaſe an unreaſonable and ſenſeleſs humour. This is an infallible argument that the love of worldly things has got the dominion in our hearts, when we do thus prefer them before our eternal Concerns, and chuſe rather to offend a gracious God, than to diſoblige an unruly Luſt. 'Tis exceeding ſtrange that the love of any thing elſe ſhould have a more forceable influence upon our Affections, and move us more powerfully than the love of infinite Goodneſs can. But, alas! we find it very often too true: The leſſer Magnet draws the Iron from the embraces of the greater:

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We forſake our God, and ſtick cloſe to our Vanities; we let go the hope we might have in the Almighty, and cling faſt to every trifle. Scarce an impotent Paſſion can ſtart up in our hearts, but it ſhall be more readily obey'd than the Great Majeſty of Heaven and Earth. And this muſt needs provoke him to the higheſt degree of diſpleaſure; not to ſee us take ſome delight in the good things of this life which he has given us; for this we may lawfully do, as has been ſaid before; but to obſerve that our minds are ſo engaged upon them, that we neglect his Commandments for their ſakes, and pay that homage and obedience unto them that can be due only to Him. And therefore thoſe lewd perſons that are deſcrib'd by the holy Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. are ſaid, *v.* 25. to have *ſerved the creature more than the Creator.* And thoſe upon whom that black Character is fix'd in the beginning of 2 *Tim.* 3. you ſhall find, *v.* 4. that they were *lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God.* And thus may

you ſee what kind of love of the world it is which is here forbidden.

IV. I come, *Fourthly*, to ſhew, but very briefly, that ſuch a love of it is inconſiſtent with the love of God. This will ſtand in need of no further proof, but only to conſider that God and the world are in themſelves of a very different Nature, and do command us clean contrary things; and we can no more love theſe two in the ſame eminent degree, than we can bear allegiance to ſeveral Princes, whoſe Intereſts are continually claſhing, and that are frequently in open hoſtility one with the other. For God commands us to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, and to taſte of worldly Delights with great caution and ſobriety; Senſuality perſwades us to give the reins to our Appetites, to take our fill, and even cloy our ſelves with carnal Pleaſures: God commands us to be liberal and open-handed to thoſe that are in want, and eſpecially to be ſure that we do no wrong nor injuſtice to our Neighbour;

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Covetouſneſs adviſes us by any means to hold our own; not to be moved with the cries and groans of the needy, and if we can but increaſe our ſtore, never matter how we do it, tho it ſhould be with the utter ruine of many a poor, diſtreſſed, helpleſs Creature: God commands us to ſubmit our ſelves to be diſpos'd of by him, and to be contented with the Portion his Providence has allotted us; Pride will be ſtill aſpiring, and egging us on to ſeek after greater Honours; it is querulous and impatient, always diſſatisfi'd with the ſtate it is in. Theſe are a few ſhort inſtances of ſome of thoſe things which God and the world do ſeverally require of us; and which of theſe two we love the beſt, his Commands we ſhall be ſure the moſt readily to obey: For both we cannot, unleſs we had the art of reconciling Contradictions, unleſs we could be ſober and intemperate, kind and hard-hearted, upright and unjuſt, humble and proud, both at once. Light and Darkneſs may ſooner agree, than ſuch oppo-

ſite diſpoſitions can be entertain'd together in the ſame Breaſt, at the ſame time. This repugnancy is plainly declared, *Jam.* 4. 4. *know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? Whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* And of this too we are to underſtand thoſe expreſſions of our bleſſed Saviour, *Mat.* 6.24. *No Man can ſerve two Maſters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* It is impoſſible to hold the Scale ſo even, and ballance our affections ſo very equally betwixt God and the world, but that one ſide will always preponderate; and how much weight ſoever we add unto that, ſo much of neceſſity muſt be taken from the other. The love of God will decay and grow leſs, in the ſame proportion that the love of the world encreaſes in us: And again, as our minds are more ſtrongly bent upon divine and heavenly Objects, the leſs careful and ſolicitous ſhall we be about temporal things.

And

And thus have we seen what is meant by the world; what love of it may be lawful, and what is here forbidden, and that this is inconsistent with the love of God.

V. I come now to the *Fifth* and last thing, to lay down some Directions how to avoid this irregular and inordinate love of the world. And to this end,

1. *First*, We should labour to get a true notion and estimate of things: For we are commonly mistaken; the world imposes upon our Imaginations, it cheats us into an unreasonable fondness, before we can tell what it is with which we are so strangely enamoured. It makes early impressions upon our tender years, and insinuates into us before we arrive at any ripeness of Judgment: It is always present with us, and perpetually beating upon our senses, making a noise in our ears, and displaying all its gaudery before our eyes. It possesses our minds in such a manner that it will not give

us leiſure to conſider ſeriouſly of any thing elſe. And no wonder then, that they that know nothing of the ſubſtance, ſhould be mightily taken with ſuch a ſhadow of happineſs. But we ſhould be of another mind, if we were truly ſenſible of the wonderful excellency of that bleſſed ſtate which God has prepared for thoſe that love him; and how empty and inſignificant all things are which we can ever hope to enjoy here. For our love of any thing is always meaſured by the opinion we have of the goodneſs of it. And we ſhould never love the world much, if we did but rightly underſtand what it were.

2. *Secondly*, When we have gotten right apprehenſions of theſe things, we ſhould be often rowling them over in our thoughts, and meditate upon them, till our hearts be affected with a due ſenſe of them, and then compare them together, and judge impartially what it is that does really deſerve the greateſt ſhare of our love. It is the want of this

this that cauſes ſo many to ruſh heedleſly into deſtruction. For if the miſerable Worldling did but ſit down and compute how little he is like to gain at the laſt by the treaſures of unrighteouſneſs; if the idle Senſualiſt did but think with himſelf how dearly he muſt pay for his ſtoln pleaſures; if the proud and ambitious man would be pleas'd to conſider that he pawns his ſoul for a puff of air; they might all poſſibly be inclin'd to more ſober thoughts, and moderate deſires. For 'tis altogether incredible that any one that is not under the power of a perfect frenzie, ſhould deliberately make ſuch a fooliſh exchange, and caſt away the hopes of a bleſſed Eternity for the unſatisfactory purſuit of ſome fading impertinencies, which ſhall be certainly concluded with everlaſting Miſeries.

3. *Thirdly*, We ſhould firmly reſolve to act agreeably to the judgment we have made. This is the greateſt ſecurity we have; without this it is not ſufficient to have right apprehenſions, and ſome good inclinations.

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We may know well enough that the world is nothing but a grand Impoſtor, a great Magician that inchants our minds, and deludes our ſenſes with falſe appearances; and we may have ſome faint wiſhes that we might be delivered from the power of theſe Charms: but this notwithſtanding we may be born down by the ſtream, and hurried away by the violence of temptation, or allured by the importunity of ſome pleaſing paſſion. To theſe dangers therefore we muſt oppoſe our greateſt ſtrength, and arm our minds with a ſteddy reſolution to act conformably to the determinations of our Conſcience. This may preſerve us upright and intire in the midſt of all aſſaults: For when it is aſſiſted by the grace of God, there is nothing able to overpower the will of a man.

4. *Fourthly*, We ſhould herein exerciſe a kind of ſelf denial, and abridge our ſelves ſometimes of ſome delights we might have innocently taken. We ſhould not always go to the extreme point of our liberty, nor uſe

uſe the utmoſt freedom that might be given us, even in lawful things. This will keep our Appetites within compaſs, and bring them into better obedience.: For when they have been uſed to be conſtantly gratifi'd, they grow the more craving; they run after their ſeveral Objects with the greater impatience, and will be very apt to tranſgreſs their bounds: But when they are curb'd and reſtrain'd, they become gentle and tractable, and reſign themſelves quietly to the conduct of our Reaſon; and they cannot be in ſuch danger of being carried into any extravagance, when they are not ſuffered to go to the extremity of what is lawful. Some voluntary abſtinencies are a good guard upon the Soul: He that would love the world no more than he ſhould, muſt not always uſe it ſo much as he might.

V. Laſtly, We ſhould addreſs our ſelves frequently to Almighty God by Supplication

and Prayer. This is the only way to procure that Grace, which is abſolutely neceſſary to enable us to overcome the world; and beſides that, it will likewiſe acquaint us with Heavenly things, and make them more familiar and pleaſant to our thoughts. And when, by this holy entercourſe with our Maker, we ſhall have attained any reliſh for Spiritual Joys, we ſhall quickly deſpiſe all thoſe fulſom and unmanly Pleaſures we admired before. We ſhall ſoon perceive that there is no compariſon betwixt Earth and Heaven; and that the Crowns of Glory which we expect, do infinitely outſhine all the glittering Vanities of the world. And we ſhall love God above all, and all things elſe for him; or rather we ſhall love him in them, by loving them only as the Effects and Emanations of his Goodneſs and Wiſdom, acknowledging his Bounty, and praiſing his Name for whatever we enjoy: And ſo ſhall the love of the world be loſt and

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ſwallowed up in the love of God, till at length it be compleat, and conſummated in his Heavenly Kingdom: *Of which God of his Infinite Mercy make us all partakers, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*: Amen.

FINIS.